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«УЧЕНИК ДЬЯВОЛА» Б. ШОУ В ПОСЛЕРЕВОЛЮЦИОННОЙ РОССИИ

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Аннотация: Данная статья посвящена литературной и театральной судьбе пьесы Бернарда Шоу «Ученик дьявола» (1897) в России после революции 1917 г. Материалом исследования служат русскоязычные версии пьесы, созданные А. Дейчем и М. Мораф специально для Театра-студии Ю. Завадского, и перевод Е. Калашниковой, вошедший в полное собрание сочинений Б. Шоу 1979 г. В заключительной части статьи рассматриваются две конкурирующие постановки пьесы, осуществленные в Москве и Ленинграде в середине 1950-х гг. Цель данного исследования — проанализировать причины не угасающего интереса переводчиков к пьесе Шоу; привлекая архивные материалы (РГАЛИ) и рецензии в советской прессе, проследить эволюцию в интерпретации драмы режиссерами, актерами и критиками. Применяются культурологический и компаративный подходы, а также метод пристального чтения. Делается вывод о том, как исторический и культурный контекст влиял на печатную и сценическую судьбу «Ученика дьявола» в послереволюционной России.

Ключевые слова: Бернард Шоу, «Ученик дьявола», драматургия XX в., послереволюционный театр в России, западно-советские литературные контакты, художественный перевод, литературная и театральная критика, Театр-студия Юрия Завадского.

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BERNARD SHAW'S *DEVIL'S DISCIPLE* IN POST-REVOLUTIONARY RUSSIA

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Abstract: The paper focuses on the presence of Bernard Shaw's play *The Devil's Disciple* (1897) on the literary and theatrical stage in Russia after the 1917 revolution. The research considers the Russian version of the text created by A. Deytch and M. Moraf (1932–1934) for Zavadsky's Theatre-Studio, and E. Kalashnikova's translation that entered the Complete Bernard Shaw's Works edition of 1979. The last part of the article studies, two rival productions made in Moscow and Leningrad in the mid-1950s. The research aims to analyze the reasons behind translators' enduring interest in Shaw's play, and to trace the evolution in the interpretation of the drama by directors, actors, and critics, using archival materials (RGALI) and reviews in the Soviet press. The methodological basis of the study was the cultural and comparative approaches, as well as the method of close reading. The article concludes on the nature of the influence of the historical and cultural context on the printed and stage fate of *The Devil's Disciple* in post-revolutionary Russia.

Keywords: Bernard Shaw, *The Devil's Disciple*, 20th-century drama, post-revolutionary Russian theatre, Soviet-Western literary contacts, literary translation, theatre and literary criticism, Zavadsky's Theatre-Studio.

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Introduction

Bernard Shaw's play *The Devil's Disciple* (1897) dedicated to the liberation movement among the British colonies in the 18th-century America turned out to be quite topical for the 20th-century audiences in Russia. After the Russian Revolution and throughout the 1920s, there were numerous productions (predominantly in Danilov–Chukovsky and N. Efros's translations) — many of them in local workers' theatres all across the country.

Given the change of sociopolitical circumstances, the perception of the play also shifted. In the Russian Empire, the plotline developing around people fighting for freedom against the King's authority was tolerated by the censorship due to the historical distance of the events described, and the fact that, from political standpoint, the drama highlighted weaknesses within one of Russia's main political opponents and rivals — the British Empire. After 1917, the revolutionary nature of the Shavian drama not only came forth, but soon was considered to be not explicit enough. Here is a telling example of a post-revolution review written by a worker correspondent in 1925:

...The triumph of the revolutionary people is outlined in several short phrases and in general the play produces the impression of being too sleek, which is probably acceptable only for the English stage in its current state. [Whereas] in this country, where revolution has brought freedom, that play should be considered as weak, and not delivering a complete, bright, and full-fledged image of all the issues tackled in the play — such as domestic life, religion, army structure, or the development of the revolution.

The production, though, is rather exciting...¹

The review of *Satan's Apostle* (the title the play received in the translation made by I. Danilov and K. Chukovsky) staged for the "Russky Dizel" [Russian Diesel] factory workers in 1927 expressed a similar opinion:

The crew manager <...> announced that *Satan's Apostle* is a revolutionary play. In fact, as far as revolution is concerned, there is not much to see. It is partially highlighted in the short but witty dialogue between the 'apostle' and the judges... The rest 'revolutionary' part of the play stays unclear: Why is 'Satan's Apostle' a revolutionary? Why does he, an atheist, go to the gallows for a pastor stating that 'someone must be hanged anyhow' and, once he escapes the execution, he shakes hands with that very pastor! Why does the pastor, a hypocrite and philistine, all of a sudden change his robe for a bandit's coat and set out to lead the insurgents? Those were the obscure places of the play².

Nevertheless, the critic insisted that *Satan's Apostle* was "necessary": "the play is well-written" and entertaining in terms of its subject but it "requires refining."³

Undoubtedly, the public that flooded the early Soviet theatres was also in need of a certain "refinement," which presupposed cultivating their tastes, improving their education and enlightening the public in general, and that was yet to come. So, by the end of the decade, there was an obvious need in a new translation and stage adaptation of *The Devil's Disciple* that would highlight the ideologically "necessary" aspects and explain the "obscure" places without compromising the artistic properties of the original piece. That challenging task was undertaken by Alexander Deytch, Maria Moraf and Yuriy Zavadsky.

¹ *Rabochiy i teatr* [Worker and Theatre], no. 8, 1925, p. 11. (In this article, all Russian renderings of Shaw, citations from Russian critical reviews, archival materials, and scholarly papers are offered in English translation by the contributor.)

² *Leningradskaya pravda* [Leningrad Truth], no. 58 (3575), 1927.

³ *Ibid.*

***The Devil's Disciple* at Zavadsky's Theatre-Studio**

In his letter of 7 December 1932 Alexander Deytch wrote:

Dear Mr Shaw,

As a literary manager of the Moscow State Theatre run by Zavadsky I assume it is my most pleasant duty to inform you that our artistic administration and the actors of our theatre are working diligently on the production of your melodrama *The Devil's Disciple*.

As you, perhaps, already know, there is huge interest to your personality and works in the Soviet Union, and that is why we are especially meticulous in tackling the task of delivering the idea and social meaning of your wonderful play to the masses.

Comrade Serebryakova⁴ has assured me that you, with the usual delicacy of yours, will respond to the request of a young Soviet theatre, and this gives me hope that you would not refuse us in giving advice and recommendations about our work on *The Devil's Disciple*. We are familiar with your comments on the play from your article *Three Plays for Puritans* but it seems to us that you could give us more valuable directions on how the play should be interpreted these days proper to make the revolutionary events portrayed in the play closer to understanding of our contemporary audience that is participating in the great fight for socialism and is seeking in theatre as well as other art forms the charge for that fight.

Your opinion should play a significant role for us, so we ask you to respond without delay all the more that the opening night is due on January 7th 1933. <...>⁵

Unfortunately, in 1932 Shaw was on his round-the-world cruise and did not have an opportunity to address the request on time. So, Zavadsky had to rely on his own creative vision, and announced to the actor Rostislav Plyatt who, at the time, was 24 years old, that he was to play 70-year-old Shaw appearing at the end of the production. Such “theatrical mischief” as Plyatt called it, excited the young actor and he “took up the task with great enthusiasm. I had a similar complexion

4 Galina Serebryakova (Галина Иосифовна Серебрякова, 1905–1980) — Soviet writer and journalist, wife of Grigory Sokolnikov, the Soviet ambassador to the United Kingdom (1929–1932). During their service in England, Sokolnikov and Serebryakova made an acquaintance with Beatrice and Sydney Webb (the closest friends of Shaw) and later became guests at the playwright's house. This made it possible for Galina Serebryakova to pass on letters between Deytch and Shaw.

5 RGALI. F. 2837. Op. 1. Ed. khr. 463. P. 1.

to Shaw's, and decided to do a light make-up" grasping the well-known features: "a white wig, bushy eyebrows, moustache and the beard." The opening night took place on 17 January 1933 and it was "a tremendous success. I also earned my share of applause — as I understood, for my dramatic appearance. The production had a huge impact" [11, p. 125].

Indeed, Anatoly Lunacharsky⁶ himself gave an extremely favourable review: "Decorations, costumes, make-up — everything was thoroughly thought through and combined into a real work of art."⁷ Lunacharsky compared some scenes to William Hogarth's engravings. (Shaw would have been very pleased to hear that comment as Hogarth was one of his favourite artists and precisely the one whom he had in mind creating his early dramas.) Lunacharsky also praised the use of music and Alexander Deytch's work as a translator. In general, he characterized the production as "merry and exciting, lively and lovely."⁸

There was, however, another prominent critic, Alexander Matskin⁹, who was more sceptical about certain aspects of Zavadsky's production. For example, to Matskin's dismay, Nikolai Mordvinov (the actor who played Dick Dudgeon) performed the role in a "cowboyish" manner.

There was a lot of Hollywood-like boldness <...> gestures — grotesque and exaggerated. Dick should be played in a more reserved, soft and warm fashion. Dick is a smart guy who knows what he is fighting for. He expresses his contempt to the citizens of Websterbridge and all the representatives of the Dudgeon family in a way which is far from the "alluring" style [Mordvinov presented]. <...> By no means is he a buffoon villain. In later scenes, the actor retreats from that inadequate interpretation. In Act III he carries out the role perfectly well: in a calmer and more concentrated manner¹⁰.

6 Anatoly Lunacharsky (Анатолий Васильевич Луначарский, 1875–1933) — Russian and Soviet writer, literature and art critic, a prominent revolutionary and politician. After 1917, he became the first People's Commissar for Education.

7 Lunacharsky, A.V. "Uchenik diavola" ["The Devil's Disciple"]. *Izvestia TsIK SSSR i VTsIK*, no. 59, 1933.

8 Ibid.

9 Alexander Matskin (Александр Петрович Мацкин, 1906–1996) — Soviet literary and theatre critic, translator, writer. In the 1930s Matskin worked as the executive secretary of the *Sovetskoye iskusstvo* [Soviet Art] newspaper; in 1937 he became one of the founders of the *Teatr* [Theatre] magazine. In the 1950s–1990s, he published numerous articles in the genre of a literary portrait about the leading theatre figures in Russia.

10 Matskin, A.P. "Shou u Zavadskogo: novaya postanovka 'Uchenika diavola.'" ["Shaw at Zavadsky's: A New Production of *The Devil's Disciple*"]. *Sovetskoye iskusstvo* [Soviet Art], no. 10, 1933, p. 2.

Lunacharsky, conversely, expressed the opinion that Mordvinov was handsome, smart, and used sarcasm and pathos just in a way that his challenging role demanded it. Zavadsky, as a director, was also delighted with the lead actor's performance and wrote:

Smart and sarcastic, his hero was a fighter for justice, a true son of nature. Mordvinov's Dick Dudgeon was a handsome, lively, free-spirited, restless character fascinating in his sincerity, courage, generous soul and purity [9, p. 271].

Another target of Matskin's criticism was Grigoriy Getmanov who played minister Antony Anderson. Matskin interpreted Shaw's pastor as a "farmer Savonarolla" managing his congregation more like a military leader. To the actor's credit, Matskin mentions that

...when Anderson quits his minister's coat and puts on the rags of a rebel, the audience perceive it as a perfectly logical transformation of the character and not a "vaudeville" travesty. There is a shift in speed: movement becomes sharper, breath shorter, rhythm of the production — faster. But Getmanov should not have preserved the [pastor's] stately bearing. Anderson does not simply change his clothes — he is in a new skin. He should feel the burden of minister's responsibilities coming off his shoulders — there is no need in fooling the dwellers of that boring town any more. He is just a rebel [one of many], and it is unusual, funny and even pleasant. That sense of pleasure and relief is absent in Getmanov's performance. <...> Psychological excesses only add unnecessary weight to the role¹¹.

The only actor who earned Matskin's full approval was Osip Abdulov playing the part of General Burgoyne. The critic identified General Burgoyne as occupying a 'vice-author' position in the play, "a blasé official, a kind of Montaigne with epaulettes, a liberalizing landlord with a sharp sense of humour, a cynical old soldier who does not idealise the state that he is loyally serving."¹² And he warned that any attempt at embodying this character on stage by means of grotesque, caricature, or exaggeration would ruin the part. In Matskin's view,

¹¹ *Sovetskoye iskusstvo* [Soviet Art], no. 10, 1933, p. 2.

¹² *Ibid.*

the scenic power and persuasiveness of that “gentleman-hangman” should shine through his *speech*, and Abdulov

...found the acute intonations of fastidiousness, exhaustion and Burgoyne’s martinet kind of aristocratism. In his performance, Abdulov relies on the word. His replies are vibrantly meaningful <...> the actor is practically immobile and delivers the part purely verbally. But what a powerful dialogue! The conversation acquires polemical sharpness <...>. And that is how Shaw should be played on stage — without any trace of an apathetic didactic monologue but through the living flow of speech, passion, feeling, obsession, through the word — through the verb.

<...> Having found the right approach to Burgoyne and the whole Act III, the director Yu. Zavadsky has approached the true understanding of Shaw’s text¹³.

However, in Matskin’s view, the director failed to understand Shaw’s idea fully:

Dick and Anderson switch places but not for the sake of showing the audience that a rebel might have a tendency to a minister’s path while a clergyman does not mind exercising with a rapier. No, the idea behind that switch is much more meaningful. It is all about that philosophy of chance, the power of nature, the conventionality of ethics within the unsettled bourgeoisie society, the raging and purifying power of a mass rebellion. Shaw gives us only hints but those hints are explicit. Unfortunately, [Zavadsky’s] theatre failed to understand those hints, and <...> in a number of scenes this has led to a conventional dead end¹⁴.

As is evident, Matskin expected Zavadsky to follow the general path outlined for the Soviet literature and theatre at the turn of the decades: to show the triumph of revolution, socialism and the first five-year plan. However, as Lunacharsky wrote, “there was no such thing in the play. It is about freethinking, rebellion and protest against philistinism; it is a radical *petit-bourgeois* play written by a man who is so smart that he often takes an ironic side view on his own position.”¹⁵ So, it was no good “trying to fit this or that play into the requirements

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Lunacharsky, A.V. “Uchenik diavola” [“The Devil’s Disciple”]. *Izvestia TsIK SSSR i VTsIK*, no. 59, 1933.

of being ‘socially meaningful’” — that, Lunacharsky insisted, was not the right approach to cultural heritage; that heritage should be “highlighted, and explained, but in no way detached from its historical roots. It should be learnt, it should be criticized, but never falsified.”¹⁶ And that is why Lunacharsky fully approved of both Zavadsky’s interpretation of the piece and the appearance of Shaw as a character in the end.

*It gets dark briskly... Fanfares. Then comes an explosion, and in the glow of sparkles,
the author – Bernard Shaw – appears.*

BERNARD SHAW. At your service! <...> Just a couple of words, my friends! It is in the hour of trial that a man finds his true profession. This foolish young man always boasted himself the Devil’s Disciple. Nevertheless, he found that it was his destiny to suffer and be faithful to the death. And this man thought himself a decent minister of the gospel of peace; but when the hour of trial came to him, he found that it was his destiny to be a man of action and that his place was amid the thunder of the captains and the shouting.

RICHARD. Minister — I should say Captain. I have behaved like a fool.

ANDERSON. Like a saint.

JUDITH. Like a hero.

BERNARD SHAW. A fool, a saint, a hero — much the same thing, perhaps. Let us not debate on the subject. One may occupy towns and win battles, but that does not mean one can conquer a nation. General, what did you say about History?

BURGOYNE. History, sir, will tell lies, as usual.

BERNARD SHAW. Regardless of your rank, you are a sensible man. However, it was I who wrote you that way, dear General Burgoyne! My play depicts the past. While the present... But I will refrain from comments as I do not wish to be rude at the end of the spectacle. Besides, there is a meeting after the show... I suppose, gentlemen [in the audience] have gone through enough worries and fears watching the tribulations of our fates, so we should be merciful.

Music. Bernard Shaw shakes hands with the actors. The curtain falls.

[13, p. 46–47]

16 Ibid.

As can be seen, seeking authenticity of Shaw's voice, Deytch and Moraf made him speak in his own words: Shaw's remarks were mainly comprised by the lines that, in the original, belonged to Anderson. Being slightly reorganized, they were aimed at underlining the main idea of the author and explaining it to the broader audience without taking unnecessary liberties or distorting the original. Nevertheless, Matskin characterized that original take on the final scene precisely as "unnecessary":

That montage of paradoxes presents a handful of flaccid, random, crumpled words, and the ending provokes annoyance and puzzlement. The spectacle that has been carefully thought through by the director, the production that relies on the high-quality translation made by A. Deytch — comes to an end with an unconvincing 'amusement park' entertainment. We are accustomed to seeing a stricter and more demanding approach of Zavadsky both to himself and his talented troupe¹⁷.

Opinions and tastes could differ but it was Shaw himself who had the last word in the argument. With the help of Lunacharsky, Deytch sent Shaw some press reviews and photographs of the production accompanying them with the following letter:

Dear Mr Shaw,

<...>

Now we are happy to inform you that the play is enjoying exceptional success in our theatre, there have been around 150 performances, and it has received rave reviews in the press which considers it to be an outstanding event in the Soviet theatre life.

We did not introduce any considerable alterations in the text of the play but we added an epilogue in which you make an appearance as *deus ex machina* and explain the social meaning of the play in [a monologue comprised of] words taken from your own speeches¹⁸.

17 Matskin, A.P. "Shou u Zavadskogo: novaya postanovka 'Uchenika diavola'." ["Shaw at Zavadsky's: A new production of *The Devil's Disciple*"]. *Sovetskoye iskusstvo [Soviet Art]*, no. 10, 1933, p. 2.

18 RGALI. F. 2837. Op. 1. Ed. khr. 463. P. 2.

As Rostislav Plyatt recalls in his memoirs, “Shaw responded with an amiable letter in which among other things he mentioned that he liked Shaw as portrayed by Plyatt definitely more than he liked the original, at the very least because he is much younger and healthier” [11, p. 125].

Translators’ strategy and historical context

Analysing the rest of the translation made by Deytch and Moraf, we should indicate that the text went under certain cuts, especially as far as the remarks are concerned. In the 2014 brief thesis article about the influence of historical context on the Soviet translation practices, Ya. Chernyshova and A. Kalnichenko expressed an opinion that Deytch and Moraf were led by political reasons when they shortened the opening remark leaving the idea of American fight against tyranny but excluding the sentence: “Into the merits of these idealizations it is not here necessary to inquire: suffice it to say, without prejudice, that they have convinced both Americans and English that the most high minded course for them to pursue is to kill as many of one another as possible” [14, p. 271]. According to Chernyshova and Kalnichenko, the translators omitted that statement because it could “discredit the idea of a liberating fight” [6, p. 233]. To a certain extent, that seems to be a valid explanation. However, the scholars limited their observation with only this particular phrase after which they switched to another text. So, the strategy behind that translators’ decision was considered in isolation and not taken systematically based on the account of the whole play. If we do take into consideration Deytch and Moraf’s piece as a whole, we will see that the majority of character descriptions (especially the main ones) were also substantially reduced.

For instance, Anthony Anderson is portrayed just as being “about 50, agile, with a thick neck” [Ему около 50 лет, подвижный, с толстой шеей, сильный] [13, p. 4]. General Burgoyne is “a man of fifty, an aristocrat, elegant and witty” [пятидесяти лет, аристократ, изысканный и остроумный] [13, p. 33]. Even Judith, whose sentimental nature is extensively and with great irony described by Shaw, in Deytch–Moraf version, is characterized quite dryly: “Young, pretty. Dressed with taste. Sentimental, about 20 years younger than her husband” [13, p. 8].

If in case with the minister, the omissions might have been caused by the overall Soviet scepticism towards religion, the same explanation cannot be applied to the rest of the cases. To our mind, all those cuts and simplifications are due to the fact that the text created by Deytch and Moraf was, first of all, created as a

working copy specially for Zavadsky's production. As the actors for the main parts were known, there was no need in giving too many details in the description — the desired traits could be improved and refined in the process of rehearsals. And, as we have seen from Lunacharsky's review, the images that Shaw "painted with words" became recreated as living pictures on stage.

The same purpose of adapting the text to the stage might stand behind its "lightening" (simplification) that was mentioned by the critics who knew the original. That "working copy" theory is also supported by the fact that for the first time, Deytch's translation was published only one year after the premiere. Moreover, the cover sincerely stated that the play was translated and reworked by Alexander Deytch and M. Moraf; it also contained the Glavrepertcom's admission¹⁹ for the play to be staged under the letter "B [Б]," which meant that Shaw's drama was considered as "ideologically acceptable."

***The Devil's Disciple* in E. Kalashnikova's translation**

The next endeavour of translating Shaw's play after the Russian Revolution was made by Evgeniya Kalashnikova (1906–1976) who was one of the renowned professional Soviet translators of English literature. And it was precisely her version of *The Devil's Disciple* that entered the first posthumous complete works edition of Shaw in the USSR (1979–1980) as her effort in bringing Shaw's text to the Russian-speaking audience was of exceptional quality.

As Leonid Sobolev²⁰ recalled, already her first translations of Erskine Caldwell, Waldo Frank, and Ernest Hemingway "reflected the exceptional gift and talent"²¹ Kalashnikova possessed. In 1939, she became a member of the Union of Soviet Writers, and since then participated in heated debates held by its Foreign Commission on the state of contemporary British literature, issues concerning the quality of literary translation, as well as authors and books that demanded attention of the Soviet reader.

19 Glavrepertkom (Главрепертком) — the Main Directorate for Spectacle and Repertoire Control. This censorship institution published an annual Repertoire Index in which the accepted writers' and translators' proposals were categorized into 3 groups marked with the first letters of the Russian alphabet, and the ones that were discarded and/or considered potentially harmful and, consequently, banned.

20 Leonid Sobolev (Леонид Сергеевич Соболев, 1898–1971) — Russian and Soviet writer and military journalist, the 1943 State Stalin Prize laureate.

21 RGALI. F. 631. Op. 40. Ed.khr. 64. L. 32.

During the Great Patriotic War (World War II), Kalashnikova was evacuated to Saratov. There she conducted lectures on the history of foreign literature at the local university and shared her knowledge in translation with her students (a first-time practice that would later become more frequent). It was also during the war that she turned to Bernard Shaw's oeuvre for the first time. Her choice fell on *Pygmalion* and *The Devil's Disciple*. It seems valid to suggest that the wartime context largely explains that choice: for Kalashnikova, who found herself a stranger in an unfamiliar city with a little son to feed and raise amidst the challenges of war, *Pygmalion* as the most linguistically demanding Shaw's play that required a lot of delicacy and precision should have served as an intellectual task demanding and engaging enough to distract her thoughts from hardships. On the other hand, the energy of resistance against oppressors and the power of noble sacrifice, human justice and national pride that filled the pages of *The Devil's Disciple* definitely resonated with the Russian audience even more intensely than ever before.

As opposed to many earlier translations, there are no cuts, omissions or distortions in Kalashnikova's version of the play. It remains as close to the original as possible. However, in no way is it a case of a translator blindly following the original text. On the contrary, Kalashnikova's mastery was formed in close connection and under thorough guidance of Ivan Kashkin²² who brought up a whole generation of prolific translators of fiction. (Those scholars became known as "кашкинцы" [the Kashkinians].)

There is extensive research concerning Kashkin's work and translation theory. For instance, A. Azov thoroughly considers what the so-called "realistic translation" method (a rather vague term introduced by Kashkin) implied in practice and concludes that it stood close to the idea of co-creation between a translator and the author whose works they were aiming to deliver in another language — not mere translation itself but fully-fledged fiction writing [1, p. 137–142]. E.D. Chernikova further investigates this idea in her 2012 article *The Description Process of a Translator's Work in I.A. Kashkin's Metapoetics of Translation* [5]. T.D. Venedictova's review of the 2007 edition of Kashkin's own poetry²³ also helps to reveal that inner connection between translation and original writing

22 Ivan Kashkin (Иван Александрович Кашкин, 1899–1963) — Russian and Soviet translator, literary scholar, critic, and poet, one of the central figures of the so-called "Moscow school of translation."

23 Kashkin, Ivan. *Stikhi*. Moscow, Zakharov Publ., 2007. 160 p. (Иван Кашкин. Стихи. М.: Захаров, 2007. 160 с.)

process for Kashkin [3], whereas M.E. Baskina, I.A. Barinova and N.M. Nesterova aim to highlight the advantages, disadvantages of Kashkin's approach and its evolution in the work of his disciples as opposed to other approaches to literary translation that existed at the time [2; 4]. Given such scholarly attention to the issue, there is no need to delve into more detail, in this article, studying Kashkin's method *per se*. In order to perceive the essence of the Kashkinians' creative work, its challenges and achievements, it seems suffice to cite the reminiscences of their younger apprentice Nora Gal in her book *Living and Dead Word*:

During the war, [they] prepared, and in the February of victorious 1945, signed for publication a solid volume of Bernard Shaw's *Selected Works*. It was then when the Kashkinians gifted us his most significant plays, which were exceptionally challenging in translation. <...>

That project required absolute mastery, perfect command of all subtle hues of humour and satire from an elusive smile to razor-sharp sarcasm.

The Kashkinians were great masters of transfiguration [8, p. 283].

Kashkin's apprentices and colleagues fought ruthlessly against literalism and "any book translated by them together was a complete and indivisible cultural phenomenon" [8, p. 284]. Speaking about Evgenia Kalashnikova's talent in particular, Nora Gal notices:

It seems that not every great master among the Kashkinians could always find — let alone with the same ease — the perfect substitute for a foreign word that entered our everyday use and that we have got accustomed to. E. Kalashnikova does it all the time so effortlessly that one is stunned with admiration [8, p. 352].

Indeed, if we take a closer look at certain excerpts, Nora Gal's characteristic proves to be quite accurate. For instance, the remarks showing irritation in Mrs Dudgeon's movements ("She shakes herself angrily out of the chair; throws back the shawl from her head <...> pushing back her own [chair] to the window" [14, p. 279]), which in previous translations were rather bleak (e.g. "she stands up"), are now filled with energy and passion: "Сердито срывается со стула, сбрасывает шаль с головы [... стул] отлетает к окну [She rushes off the chair, throws back the shawl ... the chair is sent flying towards the window]" [12, vol. II, p. 47].

Telling traits in the characters' description are also given careful examination by the translator: Christy, "a fattish, stupid, fair-haired, round-faced man of about 22," [14, p. 273] is depicted as "придурковатый" [silly, awkward, oafish but not completely unattractive] and "белобрысый" [having unpleasantly fair, practically white hair, eyebrows and lashes], which allows Kalashnikova to soften a rather negative impression with ironic sympathy. Much later, in the court scene, Kalashnikova, again, slightly softens the insult addressed to Christy by Richard: "you blatant idiot" in Russian is delivered as "простофиля несчастный [wretched simpleton]". Such strategy of associating Christy with the image of a traditional simpleton — clueless but harmless — is well-chosen for this man-child is the only of the Dudgeons (except for Essie) who doesn't denounce or hate Richard — on the contrary, he seems to have naïve admiration for his reckless brother. That contrast between the family members who have or lack humanity becomes even more evident in case with William Dudgeon, "a large, shapeless man, bottle-nosed and evidently no ascetic at table" [14, p. 284]. Here, on the contrary, Kalashnikova makes the caricature even more grotesque giving his portrait with large strokes: "Уильям Даджен, — нескладный верзила с носом сливою, явно не принадлежащий к разряду аскетов и постников [William Dudgeon, a gawky maypole with a plumlike nose who in no way is an ascetic faster]" [12, vol. II, p. 52].

Another comic means that, having noticed in Shaw's text, Kalashnikova enhances in translation is the tendency of syntactically equalizing people and objects. Here, for instance, a reader may feel that William's wife is not just deprived of individuality but acquires the same function of the man's attribute that his clothes perform: "His clothes are not the clothes, nor his anxious wife the wife, of a prosperous man" [14, p. 284].

There are a number of cases when Kalashnikova makes the stage property terms more historically specific (e.g. cupboard — поставец [credence]; prayer book — требник [breviary]) whereas other too culture-specific words more neutral (e.g. zany — клоун [clown]). All those little changes add to the slightly old-fashioned but coherent ambience, which is suitable for the setting of the play, but in no way deprive it of Shaw's modern spirit.

Thus, Kalashnikova's translation of *The Devil's Disciple* can be considered the closest to the original both on the textual and on the spiritual level. And since the moment it was published for the first time by "Goslitizdat" [the State Pub-

lishing House] in 1946, it has been the text of choice for the majority of Russian theatre directors.

Two Rival Productions of the 1950s

In May 1956, as part of the Soviet festivities dedicated to Shaw's 100th birthday anniversary, Gorky Bolshoi Drama Theatre²⁴ in Leningrad made a production of *The Devil's Disciple* based on the latest translation by Kalashnikova. Once again, the play proved to be extremely topical: whether or not it was the producers' intention, the critics now unanimously underlined the anti-colonial aspect of the Shavian mock-melodrama, which, against the contemporary historical background (India, Pakistan and Israel declaring independence, the Suez Crisis that followed), sounded fair enough and made the play resonate with the overall counter-colonial tendency in the British literature of the 1950s. One review stated:

Bernard Shaw, a true humanist and a great artist, was always an ardent opponent of colonialism. In *The Devil's Disciple*, as in many other Shaw's plays, denunciation of colonial enslavement of peoples is one of the central aspects²⁵.

Another one echoed:

And <...> even though the play does not demonstrate a revolutionary upheaval, yet the zeal of the fight, the victory of the noble and courageous people permeate every bit of Shaw's piece²⁶.

Of course, those were not the only reasons for the popularity of the production. The critics put emphasis on other problematic issues such as the dichotomy of form and content, and how deceptive looks can be; praised the director, Mar Sulimov²⁷, for maintaining the Shavian spirit and advertised *The Devil's Disciple* to the audiences by mentioning "the unexpected turn of events, the velocity of plot development," as well as "the keen and interesting situations characteristic of this

24 These days the theatre is called Tovstonogov Bolshoi Drama Theater.

25 *Smena* [Shift], no. 10, 1956.

26 *Leningradskaya pravda* [Leningrad Truth], no. 108 (12525), 1956.

27 Mar Sulimov (Мар Владимирович Сулимов, 1913–1993) — Soviet theatre actor, director, artist, one of the leading professors of theatre pedagogy, author of several books on stage directing.

Bernard Shaw's wonderful play that brightly and with great determination delivers the idea of love for freedom."²⁸ The court scene was generally acknowledged as the gem of the spectacle:

...the court scene, in which Burgoyne appears, is undoubtedly the best in terms of both direction and acting. Actor B. Ryzhukhin plays the role of Gentleman Johnny with an excellent sense of Shaw's style, and the 'graceful' cynicism of the general is concordantly accompanied by the rabidly straightforward, thick-headed rudeness of his assistant Major Swindon, whose satirical portrait is skilfully sculpted by N. Korn. It is precisely in this scene that the actor E. Kopelyan plays the role of Dick Dudgeon with the greatest liveliness, ease, and satirical sharpness²⁹.

Nevertheless, praises intertwined with criticism mainly concerning the actors' development of their character arcs. Critic G. Kapralov noted that the esteemed actress V. Soboleva made her Mrs. Dudgeon too serious in her suffering and completely overlooked Shaw's ironic mirth towards his grotesque heroine. The same seriousness narrowed down the potential of Judith in the interpretation of N. Olkhina. And even her partner A. Larikov playing Anthony Anderson with elegant translucent humour, according to Kapralov, did not fully succeed in carrying out the transition from a peaceful preacher to a courageous warrior³⁰.

Critic Yu. Kovalev fully agreed with Kapralov judgement of the female characters but, on the contrary, did not recognise any lively character or amiability in Larikov's Anderson, who produced an impression of a "doddering voluptuary who pretends to be virtuous" rather than a "hearty man," which left the audience puzzled how Judith could have fallen in love with such a man and made Anderson's transformation reminding that of the Frog Prince instead of revelation of his hidden potential³¹.

Renowned literary scholar A. Aniskt fully supported the opinion that the 1956 Anderson lacked the qualities that must have attracted Judith. However, in his opinion, the most important ones were Anderson's intelligence and wit, which made him a worthy opponent for Richard.

28 *Leningradskaya pravda* [*Leningrad Truth*], no. 108 (12525), 1956.

29 *Leningradskaya pravda* [*Leningrad Truth*], no. 125 (12542), 1956.

30 Ibid.

31 *Smena* [*Shift*], no. 10, 1956.

Dick Dudgeon's performance worried Aniskt even more as, during Act I, Richard appeared in the middle of the family reunion with a long whip which he constantly used to terrify the relatives. As a result, handsome and passionate rebel looked like "a lion among sheep," and the accessory made the character seem morally weaker turning "the Devil's disciple" into an ordinary bully. The critic blamed the overall tendency of theatre directors to "assist" the dramatist by adding some traits that the playwright must have forgotten to mention³². Luckily, "E. Kopelyan was playing [Shakespeare's] Petruccio only in the beginning," and later in the play proceeded to embody Shaw's character *per se* regaining Dick's charisma and "properly delivering the patriotic idea of his actions being, in the town of hypocrites, the only citizen who dared to tell the truth in the face of the enemies — the hangmen."³³

As objectively as Aniskt criticised the director's unnecessary additions to Shaw, he praised Sulimov for choosing the optimal translation:

Unfortunately, we still have the practice of using the so-called 'stage versions' or 'rewritings' of Shaw who does not need such help at all. In this case, the theatre took the right course of action by selecting the proper translation by E. Kalashnikova who did not take liberties with 'bettering' Shaw but masterfully delivered the stylistic merits of the original, and, due to that, the dialogue sounds brilliantly from stage³⁴.

Next year, though, there appeared another *Devil's Disciple* by the Stanislavsky Moscow Drama Theatre, and its producers gave preference exactly to one of the notorious 'stage versions' instead of Kalashnikova's masterwork. The production was directed by Rosa Ioffe and was supposed to rely on the text composed by Ilya Rubinstein. Rubinstein had previously gained fame through working on the operetta *Mister Iks* [Mister X] (1956), an adaptation of *The Circus Princess* (1926) by Emmerich Kálmán, that became extremely successful and two years later was even transformed into a Soviet musical comedy film (director Yuli Khmel'nitsky). However, not all adaptations by Rubinstein were of the same quality.

³² *Teatr* [Theatre], no. 9, 1956, p. 145.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

In an issue of *Izvestia* [The News], there was published an article by Dmitry Lyadov titled *The Tenth Muse* — a pamphlet aimed against the worshipers of “the Muse of Royalties” — a deity that is especially benevolent towards the script-writers whose main source of income is rewriting (or rather spoiling) the original theatre masterpieces. Lyadov provided convincing examples of tasteless distortions by such worshippers and, among them, he wrathfully mentioned Rubinstein accusing him of selecting voluminous pieces with good plots and dialogues and turning them into “victims” of his “scissors and glue.”

We are not in opposition towards stage versions that are smart and written with talent. But an author who unscrupulously takes up any job, and reconstructs *The Headless Horseman*, an adventure story, and *Anna Karenina*, a [serious] novel, for theatre, and *Mister Iks*, an operetta, for cinema — all with the same [irresponsible] ease creates for himself a dubious professional reputation of a mere remaker.

In Bernard Shaw’s one-volume edition, there is an excellent translation of *The Devil’s Disciple* by E. Kalashnikova.

That translation was used by the Moscow Art Theatre and the [Gorky] Bolshoi Drama Theatre in Leningrad. But the administration of the Stanislavsky Moscow Drama Theatre, for some reason, thought it necessary to stage *The Devil’s Disciple* in “their own” translation. And the only “master of literary translation” suitable for the task turned out to be notorious Ilya Rubinstein³⁵.

Those accusations were not unfounded. In the Russian State Archive of Literature and Art (RGALI), there is a director’s copy of the play which provides evidence that Rosa Ioffe, who was a guest director and, evidently, did not choose the translation herself, had to rewrite schematic and faceless parts of Rubinstein’s text to make them livelier, and the characters’ speech stylistically more in accordance with their personalities. Ioffe also added some short emotionally charged expressions where scenes reached their climax (e.g. “Fool!”, “Blasphemy!”, “Get out of my house!”). Although such additions sometimes were extra as compared to the original piece, they were in tune with the spirit of the Shavian action and helped to regain its momentum. On the overleaves of the director’s copy Ioffe wrote numerous notes. One of them states: “Don’t stretch [the scene]! One must

35 *Izvestia* [The News], no. 297, 1959, p. 4.

envision the rhythm! It should be understood that a translator cannot often convey the continuous straight-through action.”³⁶

It should be noted that Rosa Ioffe had not had previous experience of staging productions in theatre — she was a radio drama director. It might have become a disadvantage with any other literary work, but for a play by Shaw this was a fortunate coincidence. Throughout his career, Shaw paid special attention to the rhythm and music of the dialogue (as is well-known, his plays were compared to Italian operas, and that correlation was thoroughly studied by J.L. Wisenthal in his article “‘Please remember, this is Italian opera’: Shaw’s Plays as Music-Drama” [7]). So, Ioffe, as a director who had an ear for the melodic curve of the interaction between characters was a perfect candidate to put Shaw’s play on stage, and the only one who could save it from disaster with such ignorant translation.

Archival files give an insight into the thorough preparation that Ioffe undertook before the production. There are postcards with reproductions of historic engravings illustrating the eighteenth-century America, reviews of the play itself by authoritative Shaw scholars Yu. Kagarlitsky and A. Obratsova, as well as its previous stagings — among them there is the abovementioned article by Matskin on *The Devil’s Disciple* in Zavatsky’s Theatre — all of them carefully studied by Ioffe who, judging by her marks, paid special attention to the publicist nature of the play and the reproach to some theatre directors who took the material too seriously and occasionally lost Shaw’s humour. She sensed Dick’s “mischievousness” to be boyish at core, and clearly identified the Swift-like nature of Shaw’s play where the so-called “villain” turns out to “the true hero in the most elevated sense of the word <...>”. And having been touched by Richard’s ardent and noble heart, Essie, Judith and Pastor’s [souls] all of a sudden start to bloom and shine in the light of a true virtue.”³⁷

Considering the experience of her predecessors Rosa Ioffe was thinking whether or not to introduce Shaw’s figure in the spectacle, but decided to escape the tendency that, by the time, became too widespread in the Soviet theatre. However, relying on the Greek roots of melodrama as a genre performed with musical accompaniment, Ioffe introduced short songs in the production. She also gave enough freedom to the actors to transform the approach of their characters to each other.

36 RGALI. F. 3086. Op. 1. Ed.khr. 8. P. 5 (overleaf).

37 RGALI. F. 3086. Op. 1. Ed.khr. 21. P. 102–103.

For example, Dick Dudgeon's part was originally given to the actor Boris Levinson who was later substituted by Yevgeny Urbansky. Yevgeny Leonov, who at the time was in the early stages of his career and played Christy's part, recollected the shift caused by the change of the male lead in his own performance:

...the production was lively and ever-changing in its nuances <...> when Zhenya [Yevgeny] Urbansky, who portrayed Richard, entered the cast, I sensed the transformation within my character, Christy. Usually, Christy is seen as a laughable and rather pathetic simpleton; he does not even realise that his testimony helped his brother's enemies to pass a death sentence to him. While, you see, Zhenya and I got on so well that it became clear: Richard and Christy love and understand each other, they are both victims of this mad world. So, when [the soldiers] were taking Richard away, Christy was desperate <...>. Although his consciousness could not grasp the catastrophe in full, he felt that something terrible had happened. [Leaving the court], Richard was caressing Christy's head. Thus, tragedy emerged, the production accumulated poetic power. At first glance, everything went just like before but the meaning of the scene was completely different [10, p. 13].

As a result of all the efforts applied, the production enjoyed success among both the audience and the crew. Strangely enough, though, the premiere did not receive much critical attention from the press of the capital. There was just one article by Nikolai Putintsev in *Sovetskaya Kultura* [Soviet Culture] that was extremely sceptical about it and did not recognize any heroism, romance or passion in the spectacle, condemned the actor playing Dick Dungeon for tomfooleries, and disapproved the grotesque lens through which the director saw the play. Perhaps, such opinion was due to the fact that Putintsev saw Richard being performed not by Yevgeny Urbansky but by Levinson, and it is quite likely that his approach to the role was the reason behind the change of actors. Rosa Ioffe was convinced that the article was part of the inner intrigues within the theatre world and the prejudice it held against her. But whether or not her suspicions were grounded, Putintsev's assessment did not receive any considerable support in the long run. On the contrary, reviews in newspapers from different corners of the Soviet Union sang praises to the politically topical character of the production and the dramatically delivered idea that in the hour of trial any person who is no stranger to honour will give up any prejudice and join the national liberation movement;

those reviews appreciated its humour that made the audience burst into laughter, and Urbansky's nuanced performance that combined "audacity and shyness, tenderness and determination, longing for affection and evading it as an obstacle in reaching the only goal that is worth sacrificing one's life for."³⁸

Conclusion

Thus, after the Russian Revolution, *The Devil's Disciple* evoked even more interest among theatre directors and audiences than the play had enjoyed before 1917. It was widely staged in both academic and amateur theatres throughout the country as an artistic means to motivate the further fight for freedom and independence. The assessment of its productions varied depending on the critics' cultural and ideological background. As after the Revolution of 1917 and throughout the 1920s, workers became the main audience to praise and criticise *The Devil's Disciple*: they praised the exciting turns of the plot and the breathtaking performances, but their idea of a revolutionary differed considerably from Shaw's Dick Dudgeon. In the 1930s, there still remained Soviet critics who were dissatisfied with the toned-down portrayal of a mass rebellion either in Shaw's original, or in its stage adaptations but the thoughtful, high-quality productions like in Zavadsky's Theatre-Studio never compromised artistic qualities for pure ideology.

However, regardless of the decade, the Shavian wit and humour redeemed the play in the eyes of any audience. At times, though, that humour was taken too far by the directors who put an emphasis on the grotesque features of the Dudgeons or Richard's boisterous bravado in Act I (like in Mar Sulimov's interpretation). But the contrary approach of staging the play too seriously was also flawed. It was especially challenging for the actors playing Dick and Anderson to discover the right approach to showing the inner evolution of their characters so that it would not seem implausible, comic or schematic. So, the closer the directors followed Shaw's vision and spirit, the more successful the productions were. Accordingly, the choice of translation was pivotal.

Ilya Rubinstein's rewriting done first of all for commercial reasons presented an obstacle rather than providing support for Rosa Ioffe, whereas Deytch and Moraf's adaptation of the play, although considerably shorter than the original, retained the main idea of the piece and the logic of the characters' development. Com-

38 *Vechernii Tbilisi* [Evening Tbilisi], no. 157 (155), 1960.

bined together with Zavadsky's wise decision not to overwrite the dramatist but to eliminate any obscurities by putting Shaw himself in the limelight, the Deytch–Moraf version of the text assisted the male leads' transformation and the audience's understanding of it. However, Evgenia Kalashnikova's literary translation even to-day remains the indisputable masterpiece which continues to make new generations of Russian audiences fully appreciate *The Devil's Disciple* both on and off stage.

All in all, the changing historical context highlighted different aspects of Shavian drama. In pre-revolutionary theatre, it was the moral transformation of the main character. On the verge and after the Russian Revolution, the correlation between mutinies in the 18th-century America and the early-20th-century Russia came forward. By the middle of the 20th-century, the anti-colonial concept of the play took central stage in its critical reception.

But regardless of the era and the controversial character of some productions, at all times *The Devil's Disciple* made people think. And, in terms of the Shavian theatre, that is the best praise possible.

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